

THE

THIELENSIAN

The student-run newspaper of Thiel College in Greenville, PA

Special Edition

Wednesday, October 31, 2018

Thiel Hires
New Associate
Dean

by Carrie Severt

Thiel College prides themselves on the concept of creating a family like community. Thiel added to this by hiring Anthony Jones as the new Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion.

In an interview with Jones, he discussed his career at Thiel and what all it entails on the daily basis. Jones always new about Thiel, his cousin is a graduate from here and always had his eye on what all it offers. He ended up studying at the Eastern Kentucky University along with Mount Union university. He is currently working on his Doctoral Degree and has only four more classes until he starts his dissertation.

Jones decided to join the Thiel family for many different reasons.

"Thiel was always on my radar and as I began my career in high education I always had Thiel on my list of schools I would work at. So, when the opportunity presented itself I knew I would be a perfect fit, I am glad the search committee felt the same."

"My job is multidimensional and ever evolving. My responsibilities, although a lot, I do anticipate and expect them to increase as I continue to learn about the institution. I currently officially advise OBC, Organization for Black Collegates, with anticipation to advise/be involved with Alliance and WING," Jones talked about while discussing his different roles on campus.

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by Peg Watts

From hayrides to hikes, Fall in Northwest Pennsylvania has lots to offer. Leaves are turning, farms are harvesting and cultural celebrations of Autumn are all around us.

Fall may be in full swing, but there are still some great events and activities to

enjoy before Winter sets in. There are festivals and parades and tours that are inexpensive or free to the public. Most of these activities are family friendly, too. So, get ready to enjoy some of the many things to do in Northwest Pennsylvania this season!

1. See the steelhead at Trout Run

-- Take a trip to Trout Run or Godfrey Run off Route 5 in Fairview Township to catch a glimpse of the steelhead migration. Hundreds of steelhead begin to school in Lake Erie off the creek mouths about mid-September. This spectacle of nature is fun to watch!

2. The Spill-

way at Pymatuning State Park -- Where the ducks and geese walk across carpets of carp! Observe the strange and symbiotic relationship between the fish and fowl at The Spillway. The fish and feathered friends will expect bread or other feed, though so come prepared. For information and directions click here: <http://www.pymatuning-state-park.org/>

3. Ernst Trail - Created and sponsored by the Ernst Seed Company, in Meadville, PA, this well-maintained hiking and biking trails is great for skateboards, scooters and wheel-

chairs. This trail follows an old railroad line and has many scenic vistas. View the Fall foliage up close and personal on this easy to navigate trail. For more information, go here: <https://www.traillink.com/trail/ernst-bike-trail/>

Traillink.com

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Ghost Stories: Featuring Thiel College

by Carrie Severt

As spooky season comes to an end, what better way to end it then with the horror tales of Thiel College. That's right, Thiel College has a history of being haunted. Now que the horror film music, sit back and give your undivided attention to some of the stories told here at Thiel. So here are three of the most popular ones at Thiel.

Story One: get the creeps.
The Room in Sawhill

There is a room that someone died in. After their passing, the next person to live in that room also died. This happened a couple of times (depending on who tells the story) then finally Thiel decided that no one can live in that room. It is also said that when people walk by it, they can hear noises and

Story Two:
The Baby in Florence West

The story goes that over Christmas break, while all the students were gone, a homeless woman was living on the odd number side of the building. Since no students were living on campus, Thiel decided to save



Roth Hall at dawn.

Photo Credit: Brian L Brink

some dollars and shut side. the heat off on that

[cont. on page 2]

Interesting Hobbies on Campus: Cosplay

By Brian L Brink

Many people go to college because they want to be become different people. Usually that means becoming the person that they were always meant to be. There is a way, however, for someone to become a different person for one day at a time. Kaila Carolus, a junior early childhood/ special education major, does this through cosplay.

Cosplay is the act of dressing up and pretending to be a fictional character.

When describing what cosplay is to her, Car-

olus said, "Cosplaying [to me] is being able to appreciate what I like, to belong to a group of people with similar interests, and to be free to be anyone other than myself, if only for a day. It goes beyond the costumes. Sometimes it is just nice to have a personality swap, and act how I wouldn't normally."

Cosplay has a deep and rich history going back more than 80 years.

Cosplay began in 1930's North America during which time it was called 'costuming.' In those early days, it wasn't

necessary to dress as a particular character so long as the outfit was appropriate to the genre. An example of this would be, if a person was a fan of science-fiction then they would dress as a generic astronaut. As the practice of 'costuming' became more normal, conventions began looking more like masquerade balls. Before long prizes started being given out to those with the best costume.

The term cosplay was first invented in 1984 by a Japanese reporter named Nobuyuki Takahashi after he attended Worldcon in Los Angeles. He did this by combining the words 'costume' and 'play' because he thought the word masquerade sounded too old-fashioned.

Cosplay has grown a lot since 1984. A single year will see thousands of events for cosplay around the world. Conventions continue to multiply, with new ones every year. One of the relatively young ones is

World Cosplay Summit which holds the Cosplay Championship in Japan. In 2018, 36 countries participated in the championship.

Even with so many people from around the world participating in cosplay not everyone accepts it.

"People have told me it's dorky, or pretty geeky..." Carolus said.

Even though people consider it to be "dorky or pretty geeky," there are still cosplayers who spend thousands of dollars on their costumes. One veteran costume maker by the name Thomas DePetrillo spent \$30,000 on one costume, based on the Overwatch hero Reinhardt, for the 2018 New York Comic Con.

When asked how much she spends on her costumes Carolus said, "When I sew my own costumes, generally, they end up being cheaper. The cheapest costume or materials for costumes I've pur-

Dear Juliet

by Juliet

Hello all,

My name is Juliet. You may not know who I am but think of me like a life-long friend you can always go to when love has you confused. Even think of me as Dear Abby but about love. My job is to help with all the broken, lonely and conflicted hearts. I try to give advice the best I can! When you write to me, it is entirely confidential, and your letter will be shown as from anonymous. You also have the option to give a moniker. To keep with the confidentiality you can email thielenian@thiel.edu or drop your letter into the Thielensian drop-box at the post office. Matters of the heart are never easy ones, but by coming to me, they can be!

I hope to help you soon!

With Love,

Juliet



Seven Things to Do in the Area This Fall

enjoy before Winter sets in. There are festivals and parades and tours that are inexpensive or free to the public. Most of these activities are family friendly, too. So, get ready to enjoy some of the many things to do in Northwest Pennsylvania this season!

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FEATURES & EVENTS

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Thiel Happenings

Compiled by Brian L. Brink

Wednesday Oct. 31:

Pedas Presents: "Night of the Living Dead" film screening

8:30p.m.-10:30p.m. in Stamm

Come celebrate George Romero's classic horror movie's 50th anniversary. Refreshments served and door prizes awarded.

Thursday Nov. 1:

Common Hour: Dr. Louis Zona

11:15a.m.-12:30p.m. in LHR

Come listen to Dr. Zona's presentation titled "Thoughts on Contemporary Art."

Tuesday Nov. 6:

"No Action Too Small" Vira Heinz Community Engagement

12p.m.-1p.m. in LHR

Vira I. Heinz scholarship awardees host a community engagement experience including a study abroad awareness panel discussing the social and environmental issues around the world.

Thursday Nov. 8:

Common Hour: Thiel Forum

11:15a.m.-12:30p.m. in Stamm

The Executive Director of the Greenville Neuromodulation Center Benjamin Beck presents about the Microfabrication Lab.

Friday Nov. 9 - Sunday Nov. 11:

The Christians

7:30p.m. Friday and Saturday

2p.m. Sunday

Come enjoy the Thiel Players latest production. A play entitled The Christians by Lucas Hnath about faith in America.

Ghost Stories

cont. from front page

This led to the mother and child dying. It is said that you can hear the baby cry. There has been talk of people's objects moving and them watching it happen.

Story Three:

Third Floor of Roth Hall

Students always want to know what is up on the third floor of Roth Hall and some have been up there (Which is not allowed). Upstairs on the third floor is the old theater. Nobody really has ever said how its haunted only that it is. They say if you go up there, you'll witness objects move and crash by you and you'll get the sense that you aren't welcomed there. This is one of those stories that don't give a full story too. It is just said that Roth Hall is haunted.

Each of these stories have been passed down for who knows how long. It is up to the reader to decide if they want to believe them or not, after all they are just stories ...Right?

Happy Halloween Thiel!

Things to Do

cont. from front page

4. The Corn maze at Wooden Nickel Buffalo Farm -- Wooden Nickel Buffalo Farm is located at 5970 Koman Road, Edinboro, PA. The cost is \$7, with children ages 4 and under free. More information is available at 734-2833. or go to: <http://www.woodennickelbuffalo.com/>

Wear appropriate clothing and shoes; take your own flashlight or rent one for \$1. Open daily, Sundays through Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. until Nov. 4.

5. The Baldwin-Reynolds House -- This restored historic mansion hosts a museum and special tours of the old grand home. It is always seasonally decorated and has other regular events besides tours. For information about this (said to be haunted) historic treasure, go to: crawfordhistorical.org.

6. Saint Vincent Festival of Trees - The Winter Holidays will soon be upon us! Get in the mood by enjoying "a gallery of decorated trees," local entertainment, live reindeer, holiday displays, Santa's Castle, teddy bear clinic, and more. Too soon? That all depends on if you've been naughty or nice! This activity is located in Erie, PA - Nov 23 to Nov 25, 2018 For more information, click here: <https://www.funtober.com/fest/saint-vincent-festival-of-trees/>

chased had been about \$15, as opposed to the most expensive cosplay, which was about \$150."

Some people make back the money they spend on their costumes, and then some, by doing shows. According to Fox News professional cosplayers can make well into the six-figure range per year. Carolus jokingly said that though she hopes to make money from cosplaying at some point she doesn't know if she ever could.

When asked what her favorite part of cosplay Carolus said, "Conventions. Every convention has a different theme, all the locations are fun to travel to and explore, and I love meeting new people." The furthest she has ever traveled for a convention was 300 miles to the Kalahari Resort in the



Carolus cosplaying Rory Mercury from Gate

Photo credit: Kaila Carolus



2018 Salute to the Military Corn Maze

Photo credit: Wooden Nickel Corn Maze

And, our final recommendation for Fall fun in Northwest Pennsylvania region? Take a short trip to Ohio!

7. Beaver Creek State Park -- is home to abandoned locks and mills. Less than an hour, in East Liverpool, OH, lies forgotten family cemeteries and deep, dark woods that lend a creepy vibe to any Autumn hike or picnic. This state park has a rich history and many standing relics of yesteryear. It's also said to be haunted. From the old grist mill to the abandoned Bowman Family Cemetery, legends and old tales tell of ghosts and unnatural energies within this park. Just Google "Haunted Beaver Creek State Park, Ohio," and a slew of articles, websites and blocs will point you to any number of spooky day hike possibilities. And, the Fall foliage is beautiful. On a nice Fall day, take a picnic -- but

bring extra. You never know who might... join you. For official information on Beaver Creek State Park, check: <http://parks.ohiodnr.gov/beavercreek>

Experience all that this region has to offer during every season of the year. Northwest Pennsylvania abounds with natural beauty, rolling farmlands, lakes, waterways and history. You don't need to go far or spend a lot to enjoy these things -- no matter the season.

For more tips and ideas on things to do in our regions, try these links:

Crawford County Convention & Visitors Bureau

<http://www.visitcrawford.org/public/activities/Attractions.cfm>

ThingToDo.com

<http://www.thingstodo.com/states/PA/northwest.htm>

Cosplay

Poconos Mountains in Northern Pennsylvania.

She did say that she would go further for certain conventions. Carolus explained if she could go anywhere it would be either the San Diego ComicCon or Holiday Matsuricon in Florida. She said that these two conventions are both absolute dreams of hers.

Like most hobbies cosplay affects Carolus's life more than attending conventions. She must prepare for her outfits and be able to afford to go. This all takes time and energy with most of her free time spent sewing new costumes or crafting different props.

Sewing and crafting props is also one of the best parts of cosplay for Carolus. She said, "I like to see my progress I've made. Years ago, I wasn't able to sew, I was shy, pretty introverted. Cosplaying has really helped me get myself out there and help me strive to better my skills and abilities, artistically."

Carolus explained that she even though she dealt with shyness when she started she now has many friends made through cosplay. Many of her cosplay friends came from her hometown and surrounding areas while others are convention friends. Convention friends, she explained, are people she met and only see at the different conventions she goes to.

She went on to say that it's generally a nice community with everyone being very friendly. Sometimes, however, the people are a little too friendly, which is one of the biggest cons of cosplaying for Carolus.

"A lot of times at different conventions there is a lot of male harassment. Being in costume, people like to think it's okay to touch you, hug you, take photos of you without your consent, and it personally just makes me really uncomfortable," Carolus said.

Along with meeting creeps at conventions she said that she has also met a few famous people. "I've met Sean Schemmel who is the voice of Goku from Dragonball Z, Todd Haberkorn, Josh Grelle, and the youtuber ProZD," Carolus said.

She has been cosplaying since she was 13 years old when a friend talked her into going to her first convention. She explained how she felt out of place then because she didn't have a costume and has been cosplaying ever since. Carolus said that she has no intention of stopping anytime soon and that she absolutely loves it.

Carolus doesn't know anyone else personally that cosplays on campus but would love to meet anyone that does.

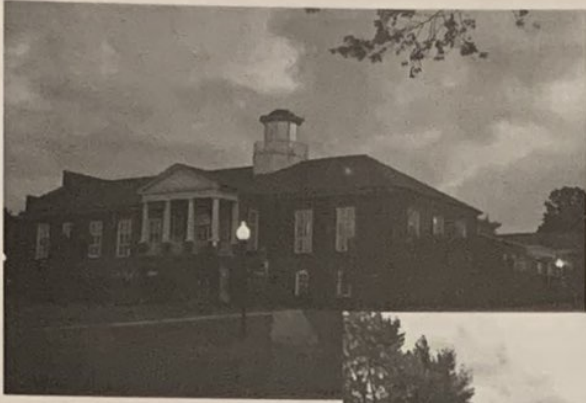


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AROUND CAMPUS

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Wednesday, October 31, 2018

THIELENSIAN





A Letter on the Campus' New Smoking Policy

by Hans G. Meyers

To the Administration of Thiel College:

I respect the position you are in, and I respect your viewpoint. Tobacco products are addictive, they are immensely harmful to the health of the user. However, the premise that this proposal is "promoting good health and providing a safe and healthy living, learning, and work environment for our students, employees and guests," is inherently flawed. Dr. Ronald Bayer, a professor at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, authored a study in 2013 about public smoking prohibitions, limitations, and bans. Such policies, Bayer and his colleagues found, were meant more to socially condition to the "denormalization of smoking" rather than any genuine effort to ensure the health of others, given that the study found that "the evidence of harm to non-smokers on the beach or in a park from someone smoking is virtually non-existent."

Yes, the dangers of Second-Hand smoke are real: but those dangers only truly exist in large quantities and in poorly ventilated spaces. Unless there is an epidemic of people smoking in their classrooms, someone smoking a cigarette at – for instance – the benches in front of the Academic Center already further away than the proscribed 25-foot radius from an entrance is doing no harm to anyone but themselves. When I last checked, we smokers are still allowed to do that. For many people I know on this campus who use vapes, who smoke cigarettes, or who chew tobacco, it is a method of controlling stress caused by high course work.

I ask, at least, for honesty: you are trying to hide us from the view of visitors to campus in order to "beautify" the campus, as if we smokers were an unsightly patch of dirt beside a sidewalk that is concealed with potted plants in advance of visit days – a problem that can simply be hidden.

It was your belief that the Student Government Association Meeting of Tuesday, October 23, would be a good time to present your new campus policy attempting to curtail the use of tobacco products on campus. Of course, as I'm sure you'll point out, your proposal only relates to encouraging people to use a total of five designated smoking areas around campus. The problem with the proposed locations are likely the very reason they were selected: out of sight and out of mind of any potential campus tours which occur.

Let me pose you a hypothetical question: it's the middle of February, it's 11 degrees before wind-chill, and it's a whiteout blizzard. Suppose a student had a Juul they wanted to vape from. Are they going to put on several layers to traverse to "Howard Miller Student

Center Northwest" or "East Campus Athletic Events Area" to take a few hits of their vape, or are they just going to sit in their rooms and vape – as some already do in spite of it already being a violation of Thiel College policies?

Additionally, I wonder whether you have considered the potential impact of this proposed policy? What percentage of the student body either smokes cigarettes, vapes, or chews tobacco? I would be willing to bet it's a high percentage – as 20% of the United States' population between the ages of 18 and 30 vape and 16% smoke cigarettes, according to a recent Gallup Poll. If you attempt to confine these students to five areas – I will also point out there are more cigarette butt bins around the Freshman dorms and the HMSC than there would be "Designated Smoking Areas" on campus – do you think they will happily oblige you? As the end of the semester nears, you must ask yourselves if you're willing to enact a mid-year policy change which could endanger retention and recruitment?

I know what you're thinking: would someone leave the Thiel College community over this, or choose not to attend Thiel because of this policy? I can assure you, in conversations I've had with students who smoke or vape, they would. Statistically speaking, those who smoke tend to skew from low-income economic backgrounds. Thiel is not a cheap school, even with the availability of financial aid. It could, potentially be the straw which might break the camel's back for some students – especially our commuter student population.

And finally, I must ask why "all employees" are made to enforce this policy? Will our housekeepers who smoke have to tell us not to smoke outside of our buildings? Will we expect Thiel College Public Safety to take time from more pressing matters – such as actual crimes – to scold us for smoking as we walk between Pedas and the HMSC? Should we expect our academic advisors and our professors to take time from their days to tell us to move with our cigarettes or our vapes despite no one else being around? The last time I checked, our faculty and staff have far more important things to do than to act as babysitters or parents to someone who's turned to tobacco to cope with stress, such as I have.

Yours
Hans Myers, '19

Sincerely,

P.S. - I urge all students whom this policy would affect – and those who realize this is little more than an effort to marginalize and hide students from view for personal choices – to attend the next SGA meeting on November 6 at 9:30 p.m. in the Stamm Lecture Hall in Pedas to make your voice heard.



Ghost Stories

cont. from front page

"My job is multidimensional and ever evolving. My responsibilities, although a lot, I do anticipate and expect them to increase as I continue to learn about the institution. I currently officially advise OBC, Organization for Black Colligates, with anticipation to advise/be involved with Alliance and WING," Jones talked about while discussing his different roles on campus.

During the interview, he went on to talk about the goals he has set for the campus, "I want the students to gain a better understanding of how to work and live in an ever-growing diverse world. My goal is for no students to leave Thiel College not being aware of how they see and treat people."

Jones later discussed his goals for the program in the future, "With the program being so new it's not as much about changing as it is about adding. I am looking to add a Diversity Advisory Board, Diversity Training, Cultural Celebrations, Mentoring Programs, Summer Bridge Programs, Diversity Summit, etc. The expectations I set for myself are very high!"

"So if one chooses to not treat those who are different respectfully it will be a conscious decision on their part, not that they are not aware."

Jones wants a lot of change for the future and for the students at Thiel to understand diversity and how this is applied in the real world.

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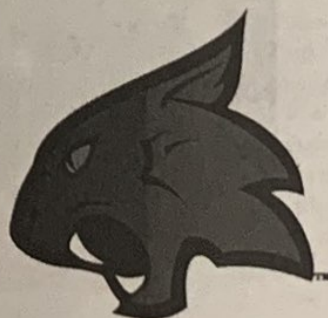
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About the Thielensian

The Thielensian is Thiel College's student-run news organization funded by the Student Government Association. Our mission is to serve the community by publishing timely, fair, and relevant news, sports, feature stories, and other information, and to provide a lively forum for students expression and the opinions of others.





Holidays Around the World

by Brian L Brink

Around this time every year the people of the United States get ready for a spooky holiday. However, not everyone on Earth celebrates Halloween.

There are many holidays around the world that are celebrated around this time. In China there is The Double Ninth Festival. In India there is Vijayadashami and Diwali. Ireland has Samhain. Of course, closer to home is The Day of the Dead in Mexico.

All these different days and festivals are celebrated for different reasons, but all come around the same time and all bring people together.

The Double Ninth Festival, also known as Chongyang Festival, in China is celebrated on the ninth day of the ninth month in the Chinese calendar. It is a traditional Chinese holiday dating back 2000 years before the Han Dynasty, which began in 25 C.E. The day moves around on the Gregorian calendar from year to year. Last year, it was observed on Oct. 28; this year, it was observed on Oct. 17; next year it will be observed on Oct. 7.

The customs associated with the festival include climbing mountains, eating Chongyang cakes, drinking chrysanthemum wine, and wearing the Zhuyu plant. Most of these customs came from the legend surrounding the origin of the festival.

According to legend there was a plague demon living in the river that was making people sick and even die. One day a man named Huan Jing decided to fight the demon but before doing so sent the whole village to the top of a hill with chrysanthemum wine and wearing the Zhuyu plant. When the demon came out of the river, on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month, it became dizzy from the scent of the wine and the plants and Jing was able to kill it.

Today, the Double Ninth Festival is observed by Chinese, Japanese, and Korean people. It is also a time for visiting cemeteries and paying respects to the ancestors.

In India there are two main holidays around this time of year celebrated by followers of Hinduism.

The first of these is Vijayadashami, also known as Dussehra, and is a major Hindu festival celebrated on the tenth day in the Hindu calendar month of Ashvin, the seventh month of the Hindu Luni-Solar Calendar. Much like the Double Ninth Festival it moves around on the Gregorian calendar. Last year it was observed on Sep. 30; this year it was observed on Oct. 19; next year it will be observed on Oct. 8.

The reason for this festival depends on which region of India one is in. In the southern and eastern states it remembers goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura to restore and protect dharma. In the northern and western states it remembers God Rama's victory over the Ravana, to symbolize triumph over evil.

In the north and west it is celebrated in honor of Rama. During the festival, thousands of drama-dance-music plays based on the Ramayana are performed at outdoor fairs. There are also towering effigies of the demons Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Meghanada, which are burnt on the

last night of the festival.

The origins of this come straight from the Ramayana, which is an ancient Indian epic poem describing the struggle between Rama and Ravana. According to the poem Ravana, who after receiving a boon from the creator-god Brahma, was incapable of being killed by gods, demons or spirits. Because of this, Lord Vishnu decided to incarnate as the human Rama. Ravana then kidnapped Rama's wife Sita which started a war. However, Rama being human allowed him to kill Ravana and establish Dharma on Earth.

The second holiday from Hinduism is Diwali, or the festival of lights, or the Hindu New Year. It can be observed anywhere between the days of Oct. 15 and Nov. 15, depending on the Hindu Luni-Solar Calendar. Last year it was observed on Oct. 19; this year it will be observed on Nov. 7; next year it will be observed on Oct. 27. The celebrations of Diwali go for five days, beginning two days before the main date and ending two days after the main date.

Diwali is celebrated for different reasons depending on one's region and religion, as it is also observed by Jains and Sikhs. It is the most awaited and the most celebrated festivals of India. The history of Diwali is full of many different legends from the three religions with the central theme of all leg-

ends pointing out to the classic truth of the victory of the good over the evils.

Diwali is one of the only festivals to be celebrated in every state of India and is celebrated with the lighting of Diyas, clay oil lamps, and candles all around the house and worshipping the Laxmi Ganesha to summon health and wealth. It has also become mandatory to exchange heartfelt gifts between friends, family, and colleagues as gesture of love and affection. There are also grand feasts that include many different varieties of sweets.

Diwali allows modern celebrators to pause and be grateful for what they have, to make special memories with family and friends, to laugh and enjoy what life offers them.

Moving away from India, we head to Ireland where Halloween began in the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. Samhain is the Celtic New Year and always falls between the evening of Oct. 31 and the evening of Nov. 1.

Samhain was the division of the year between the lighter half (summer) and the darker half (winter). It was believed that at this time of year the division of this world and the next was at its thinnest allowing spirits to pass through. The family's ancestors would be welcomed into the home while the harmful spirits would be warded off.

People would wear costume and masks to

disguise themselves as harmful spirits and therefore avoid harm.

The bones of livestock would be thrown into bonfires and household fires would be extinguished and reignited with the flame of said bonfire.

Nobody really knows how long Samhain has been celebrated for.

There are two hills in Boyne Valley that are associated with the festival, Tlachtga and Tara. Tlachtga was the one mostly associated with Samhain, with Tara coming in second to Tlachtga. However, Tara is the home of the Mound of Hostages which has an entrance that lines up with the rising sun of Samhain. The interesting thing is this mound is over 4500 years old.

In the 9th century Pope Gregory declared Nov. 1 as All Saints' Day and Nov. 2 as All Souls' Day to Christianize the holiday. However, the pagan rituals didn't die out but moved to Oct. 31 which became All Hallows' Eve, or Halloween.

In Mexico, Nov. 1, or All Saints' Day, would be turned into Día de los Muertos, also known as the Day of the Dead. This is not just a Mexican version of Halloween though. The two holidays differ greatly in origins, traditions, and tone.

Where Halloween originated in Ireland, the Day of the Dead originated thousands of years ago with the Aztec, Toltec, and other indigenous people. These pre-Hispanic



cultures considered mourning the dead disrespectful because they saw death as a natural phase in life's long continuum. For them, the dead were still members of the community, kept alive in memory and spirit and during Día de los Muertos they temporarily returned to Earth.

Modern celebrations are a mash-up of the pre-Hispanic religious rites and Christianity. It is a celebration of life and death, observed all over Latin America with colorful calaveras, skulls, and calacas, skeletons. It is also a time to demonstrate love and respect for deceased family members.

The centerpiece of these celebrations are ofrendas, altars, that are used to welcome the spirits back to the world of the living. These altars are loaded with offering for the dead including food, water, family photos, and a candle for each dead relative. The main flower of decoration is the marigold as it is said to help guide the spirits while they're on Earth.

In 2008, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO, recognized cultural importance of Día de los Muertos by adding it to its list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The core of the holiday is meant as a reaffirmation of indigenous life.

Some of these holidays are completely different from our Halloween, while others helped form it, but all have the same spirit. They all bring people together for celebration and remembrance.



Three towering effigies about to be burned during Vijayadashami

Photo credit: Brian L Brink